दशाओं में सुधार लाने के लिए क्या आवश्यक कदम उठाए जाने चाहिए, इसके लिए हम संबंधित सरकारों को आग्रह कर रहे हैं।

प्रधानमंत्री (श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी): यह जो माननीय सदस्या ने प्रश्न उठाया है, यह गंभीर प्रश्न है, और मैंने स्वयं देखा है कि केरल से जो महिला कार्यकर्ता या मजदूर और प्रदेशों में जाते हैं, उनके लिए कठिनाई पैदा होती है नियमों को ठीक तरह से लागू नहीं किया जाता है; सुरक्षा के प्रश्न रहते हैं, सुविधाओं के सवाल उठते हैं। केन्द्र भी इस संबंध में अपना उत्तरदायित्व समझता है और हम यहां से एक उच्च अधिकारी भेजेंगे जो इन प्रदेशों की स्थिति का अध्ययन करके रिपोर्ट लाएगा।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bommai, do you want to put your question now? ....*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI: Sir, the Labour Minister has repeatedly said that there are laws in this regard. Yes, there are laws, but they are not enforced. Here that is not the point. The Prime Minister has assured that a senior officer will be deputed to go round and report to the Government of India. It is a welcome step because women workers are paid less for the work which they are doing. They work for more hours. It is a clear exploitation of women workers. Therefore, as per the assurance of the hon. Prime Minister, if an early report is got, the Government of India can take some certain action. I welcome the assurance given by the Prime Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can put a qustion later when we get a report in this regard. ....*(Interruptions)*.... Next Question. ....*(Interruptions)*....

Revision of Pay Scale of Section Officers of C.S.S.

*163. MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the issue of revision of scale of pay in the grade of Section Officer in the Central Secretariat Service is still under Government's consideration, if so, the stage of the matter at present;

(b) whether the Section Officers functioning as Desk Officers are still getting the Desk Officer Allowance at pre-revised; and

(c) what are the reasons for delay is finalization of the above issues and by when the final decision will be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING AND DEPARTMENT OF PENSION AND PENSIONERS WELFARE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS. (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Section Officers of the Central Secretariate Service, have already been granted the revised (replacement) pay scale of Rs. 6500-200-10500 as 5th Pay Commission's recommendation vide Department of Expenditure Notification dated the 30th September, 1997 and arrears have also been paid with effect from 1st January, 1996. A large number of suggestions including for further revision of their pay scale were, however, received by the Government to refer the matter to the Committee of Secretaries on Fast Track Items which was notified by the Government *vide* DOPT O.M. No.2/2497-PIC Dated 21st July, 1997 and to amend the terms of reference of the aforesaid Committee for this purpose. After examining these suggestions, the Government decided not to amend the terms of reference of the Committee but asked the Committee to hear the representations of CSS. The views of the Committee on Fast-Track Items and other relevant inputs are under consideration of the Government and a decision in this regard is likely to be taken on merits.

(b) Yes, Sir. The issue of grant of Desk Officer Allowance at revised rates will be decided at the earliest and higher rates of an Allowance that would be approved for Desk Officers, will be made effective from 1st August, 1997 and arrears will be paid accordingly as per the Agreed Settlement with the Staff Side of the JCM.

(c) No. decision could be taken in the matter due to complexities involved and factors beyond the control of the Government.

MISS FARIDA TOPNO: Respected Chairman, Sir, I am not satisfied with the answer given to my question. When the pay scale of Assistants was revised before the constitution of the Fifth Pay

Commission, there was a similar demand from the Section Officers of the Ministries, which was a natural consequence. If the Pay Commission did not grant them a higher pay scale, the Government should have been more considerate to the Section Officers and their case should have been recommended to the Fast Track Committee. Sir, while the Section Officers of the Supreme Court and the Secretariats of Parliament get the higher pay scale of Rs. 8,000-13,200/-, their counterparts in the Central Ministries are given the lower scale of Rs. 6,500-12,000/-.

Part B of my question is whether the Section Officers of the Central Secretariat will also be granted the Group A status, as has been granted to the Section Officers of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariats.

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Sir, I would like to put the factual position before the hon. Member. These officers are recruited through the Civil Services examinations. There are some groups of officers. These Group B Officers were in the pay-scale of Rs. 2,000-3,500. The Fifth Central Pay Commission had recommended grant of replacement pay-scale to the Section officers of the C.S.S. This was equivalent to the scale of Grade Officers in the Headquater services and Customs services. It had been recommended for grant to entry grade Officers. The Pay Commission's recommendations were accepted. So, the issue of higher pay-scale for the C.S.S. Section Officers is closed. What is being looked at at the moment, and is being considered, is the revision of the Desk Officers' allowance.

MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Section Officers of the G.C.S. in the Ministry of Finance and the Accounts Officers in various Ministries working as Section Officers/heads are already drawing a higher pay-scale of Rs. 7,500 to Rs. 12,500. Why is the Government not negotiating with the C.S.S. Section Officers for upgrading their pay-scales to at least Rs. 7,500-Rs. 12,500, if not Rs. 8,000- Rs. 13,500?

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: The Section Officers are getting what the Pay Commission had recommended. That matter is closed now. This question is not really relevant, since it does not

pertain to the C.S.S. Officers. The Accounts Officer category is a different cadre.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: I would like to know whether the Government plans to have the automatic attendance punching system to ensure regular attendance of the Officers. In its absence, how does the Government plan to improve the efficiency of its departments?

MR. CHAIRMAN: This does not arise out of the main question.

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Yes, Sir. I would be glad to reply if the hon. Member gives a notice on this.

SHRI SURESH A. KESWANI: Sir, it is often said that the Government of India is really run by the Section Officers. It is the notes which they prepare and put up. Everybody else seems to be signing them and sending them up. These are the Officers who have been responsible for slowing down the efficiency of the country, as has been the experience of the last 50 years. Either promote them or get rid of them. Let us do something about this whole area, which requires an urgent attention on the part of the Government.

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: What can I say on it? It does not arise out of the main question.

प्रधान मंत्री (श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी): जब मैं विपक्ष में था तो मैं भी यही समझता था, अब मेरी राय बदल गई है।

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Sir, (c) part of the question is: "What are the reasons for delay in finalisation of the above issues and by when the final decision will be taken?" The question is very specific. The answer given is, "No decision could be taken in the matter due to complexities involved and factors beyond the control of the Government. Can it be a reply for part (c) of the question? When the question is specific, she has stated that "No decision could be taken in the matter due to complexities involved and factors beyond the control of the Government." What are the reasons? What are the factors beyond the control of the Government? You have to inform this august House about all the factors involved.

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Sir, the reasons for delay in taking the decision are: primarily there is a need for further discussion between the cadre controlling authority and the

representatives of the Associations with a view to arriving at an acceptable proposal. There was also a request from the Chief Election Commissioner through his letter dt. 5.10.1998 to the Home Minister who is the Chairman of the Group of Ministers' for addressing the question of grant of new scales; and from the DANICS, in December, 1998. In view of the impending elections also, it got delayed. Then, the formation of the Government took place. I would like to maintain that while considering the matter of pay scales, the Government of India will be taking into account all aspects of the case, including the job content, level of responsibilities, horizontal and vertical relativities of other services, recommendations of the Committee of Secretaries, claims made by various services; and finalisation would be done after considering all these aspects, so that no injustice is done in the matter of pay scales.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: What were the factors beyond the control of the Central Government?

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: There was the General Elections. That is the reason for the delay. Those are the factors beyond the control of the Government.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: You cannot say, "factors beyond the control of the Government." You could have given elections as the reason.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 164. Mr. Vayalar Ravi.

Disinvestment in GAIL

*164. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI:†
SHRI K.R. MALKANI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to disinvest the shares of the Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL);

(b) if so, the price fixed for the share and the details thereof;

† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Vayalar Ravi.